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AUTHOR Chapman, Bernadine S.
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ABSTRACT

This report presents the Academic Retention and Talent Retrieval components of the Special Services Program at Northern Illinois University. The support structures are described in detail, including: CHANCE counseling, which assists students with academic and financial planning, personal growth, peer tutoring, and career counseling; and the Talent Retrieval component of the retention plan which is directed at students who have been academically dismissed from the university. The objectives of the Student Leadership conference are discussed and workshops are described. The philosophy, objectives and workshops offered by the Career Program and Peer Tutoring Program are also outlined. Examples of various forms and questionnaires used by the different program components are provided. (JAC)

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ACADEMIC RETENTION AND TALENT RETRIEVAL

Bernadine S. Chapman
Director of Special Services
Northern Illinois University

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CG 016259

Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, Detroit, MI, March 17-20, 1982.

I. PURPOSE

II. ACADEMIC RETENTION COMMITTEE

- A. STUDENTS WITH A BORDERLINE GPA
- B. STUDENTS ON CURRENT PROBATION
- C. STUDENTS ACHIEVING SATISFACTORILY OR ABOVE

III. STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

- A. STUDENT CONTRACT SHEET
- B. EXIT FORM

IV. TALENT RETRIEVAL COMMITTEE

- A. STUDENT DISMISSALS
  1. ACADEMIC
  2. FINANCIAL
  3. OTHER
- B. UPPERCLASSMEN: BRIDGING RELATIONSHIPS
  1. SURVEY
  2. STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
  3. WORKSHOPS

V. APPENDIX

- A. PEER TUTORING
- B. CAREER ORIENTATION

VI. ADDENDUM

- A. STUDENT CONTRACT
- B. EXIT FORM
- C. STUDENT DISMISSAL QUESTIONNAIRE
- D. UPPERCLASSMEN QUESTIONNAIRE
- E. CERTIFICATE FOR AWARD FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (Cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above)
- F. CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION (Term grade point average of 3.0 or above)
- G. STUDENT MIDTERM EVALUATION REPORT

Introduction ---

The Academic Retention and Talent Retrieval component of Special Services is firmly committed to the purpose of providing support structures which will enhance and ensure students overall academic success, resulting in degree completion and/or the pursuit of a viable and relative career in the future.

These support structures are evidenced through the following: CHANCE counseling service which is geared toward assisting students with academic planning, financial assistance and personal growth and development. Peer Tutoring serves to strengthen academic performance in the subject areas in which students are encountering difficulties and Career Counseling enables students to make career decisions realistically on the basis of an appraisal of career options and individual strengths, weaknesses and interests.

Thus in accomplishing these specific mandates established by Special Services, we are charged with the responsibility of completely supporting the students of this program during their entire stay at Northern Illinois University. To effectively implement this charge, and to ease the acquisition of educational skills, and maintain the academic guidelines designated by the various colleges, we recognize the relevance of developing a strong rapport and alliance with them. Therefore, in fulfilling this affirmed commitment, we will strongly adhere to the rules, regulations, and guidelines ascribed to in this document.

Hopefully this program will enlighten and develop student awareness to the level of these words spoken by a prominent author ---

"Where have I come?
Where am I going?
And how will I know I've arrived?"

Bernadine S. Chapman
Associate Director of Special Projects/
Director of Special Services

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Special Services is firmly committed to the purpose of providing support structures which will enhance and ensure students overall success, resulting in degree completion and/or the persual of a viable and relative career in the future. Thus it became evident, after analyzing the attrition rate of students, that some early preventive measures should be taken. Therefore, these guidelines were established to create an Academic Retention Plan which would intervene and initiate constructive steps to facilitate and support the student's academic development.

Students with a borderline GPA will have their records reviewed carefully and an early preventive plan as outlined below will be implemented.

A. Invite students to a general meeting which will make them aware of their academic status and the possibility of their being placed on academic probation.

B. Counselors will be primarily responsible for working out a voluntary study plan with the student and making an appropriate referral to the Coordinator of Peer Tutoring for tutorial assistance.

C. Students will be encouraged to report on a periodic basis to counselors so that adequate follow-up can be provided.

D. The Career Placement Counselor will see all students who are having problems identifying their choice of major or those who are experiencing problems with their present choice.

Students who are currently on academic probation will be dealt with accordingly:

A. Letters will be mailed to all students on academic probation requesting an immediate interview with members of the Academic Retention Committee.

B. Appointments will be scheduled for interviews as soon as students respond.

C. The committee will meet with the counselors of the students being interviewed before that takes place.

D. If the student desires his counselor's presence during the interview we will try to schedule this with the counselor.

E. The student, counselor and committee member will try to accurately diagnose the student's academic problems.

F. An academic prescription will be devised on the basis of these findings and the students must agree to honor the following prescribed things.

1. Suitable study plan with specific hours stated.

2. Tutorial assistance on a regular basis until probationary period has ended.

3. Consultation with the Career Placement Counselor on the choice of a realistic major and a possible change of major if needed.

4. Regular contacts established with counselor according to conditions agreed upon between student and counselor.

5. Evaluation of students' midterm performance (Addendum G).

For those students who are achieving satisfactorily or above, counselors will contact them and provide positive reinforcement for their academic efforts. Those who have achieved academic excellence, meaning 3.0 grade point average or above, will be sent a Certificate of Award for Academic Excellence.

The structure of the Retention Committee should be as follows:

A. Chairperson -- Director of Special Services

B. Coordinator of Peer Tutoring

C. Counselors (counselor/student)

The chairperson for this committee is responsible for:

1. Immediate notification to students about the committee's interest concerning their probationary status.

2. Recording of appointments for student's interviews.

3. Recording and transmitting of all pertinent data which should be referred to the Director of Special Projects.

4. Recording of pertinent data to be placed in student folders.

The Director of CHANCE will be responsible for:

1. Securing up-to-date transcripts on the students being interviewed.

2. Scheduling counselor's presentations for students with a low GPA or counselor's presence during student interviews.

It should be the responsibility of the counselor to compile all information into a standard form suitable for quick review by the committee as listed below:

1. Summary of counselor's contacts with the student.

2. Summary of instructors' comments.

3. All pertinent academic information.

4. Any other relevant information to the student's academic welfare.

After each student has been properly interviewed and a specific plan of action has been discussed and agreed upon, the student will be required to sign a contract which will fortify his interest and commitment to improve his academic status (see Addendum A).

Counselors will be key implementors for the Retention Program because many disciplines have requirements in addition to the University's general academic regulations.

Thus counselors must monitor very closely students who have chosen majors with departments that have strict requirements and demand slightly higher GPA scores for entrance. Due to the counselor's knowledge and expertise in dealing with the student on a regular basis, the committee can be alerted in advance to students who will need our support and assistance. Therefore, it is essential that we all stay abreast of the specific departmental guidelines.

TALENT RETRIEVAL

The second component of this retention plan is called Talent Retrieval. The emphasis for this phase of the program will be directed toward students who have been academically dismissed from the University and upperclassmen who are less involved with the program than they were during their freshman year. The procedure for students who have been academically dismissed will be as follows:

A. Petition to be readmitted by the Dean's Office.

B. After readmission, select carefully courses the student needs to take.

C. Designate the specific number of credits (12 maximum & minimum).

D. Repeat within thirteen (13) months courses with Ds and Fs to prevent grading penalty.

E. State the grades which student must achieve (two Bs and two Cs).

The structure for this committee will be the same as the one for the Academic Retention Committee.

The Chairperson will be responsible for:

1. Perusing the dismissal folders.

2. Selecting those students who appear salvageable (GPA of 1.7 - 1.9).

3. Establishing communication lines.

4. Structuring interviews.

The Director of CHANCE will be responsible for:

1. Securing current transcripts.

2. Counseling students on petitioning procedure for re-admittance.

3. Advising students of the thirteen (13) month interval for repeating courses.

4. Structuring a viable schedule for built-in courses which will facilitate student's removal from extended or final probation.

Students will be scheduled for Peer Tutoring services if they are readmitted and the Career Counselor will deal intensively with students readmitted or not, who need assistance with their choice of major, alternative career planning or job placement information.

Students who are academically dismissed or who decide to "stop out" will be interviewed by telephone or requested to complete an exit interview-sheet before leaving the institution (see Addendums B and C).

Upperclassmen formerly have not maintained a close relationship with the program after their freshman year. In some instances, students have alienated themselves from the program during their tenure here at Northern Illinois University. This is not to say that we are not interested in their becoming a natural part of the University's mainstream, but that contact at regular intervals should be continued. This would afford Special Services with the continuity and evaluative data necessary to support its overall retention and graduation of students.

Upperclassmen have needed and sought additional help in some areas of social and personal development elsewhere. Therefore, we must bridge relationships with other interested organizations, groups and our upperclassmen to adequately ascertain their needs and how to meet them. As an initial tool for assessing students' interests and motivational levels the upperclassmen questionnaire survey will be used (see Addendum D).

According to the response of and data collected from our questionnaires, workshops addressing interest areas, needs or problems can be and are being developed and interwoven with existing organizations and groups which are presently working with similar areas involving students from this program.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The goal of the Minority Student Leadership Conference is to structure activities which will provide training for the acquisition of skills that are crucial to the development of good and effective leadership. These activities are also geared to enhance students' awareness of the potential and importance of good leaders to the future success of minority students at Northern Illinois University, as well as to their own future activities as constructive citizens.

The specific objectives evolving from this goal are:

To instruct students in the recognition and development of specific leadership skills required for holding various offices.

To select students who demonstrate leadership characteristics and potential for training in various leadership roles.

To teach students the organizational structure of an academic institution and how to work most effectively within the structure.

To educate students in strategies needed for selecting, organizing, and electing the candidate(s) of their choice.

To instruct students on policies, procedures, and mechanisms for understanding and participating constructively with in the political structure at Northern Illinois University

To educate students as to the important reasons why minority students can and should play a role in the governance of NIU.

To inform present student leaders of how to plan, organize, and develop organizational activities which will be beneficial to members both academically and socially.

WORKSHOPS

Tutor Orientation Training Seminar - (This is a training session, approximately 6-8 hours, specifically for students who wish to work with students serviced by our program)

Career Orientation Session - (For all students but specifically for those who are second year undecided or on probation and for those applying to restricted disciplines)

Career Assessment Workshop - (Use of Career Awareness Inventories)

Information Workshop - (Discussion of academic rules and regulations for and specific academic qualifications for disciplines in high demand, e.g., computer science, business, nursing, etc...)

Time Management - (Develop and ordering priorities and establishing realistic schedules which reflect best use of students' time)

Career Skill Identification Inventory

Career Work Values

Midterm Evaluation Conferences - (Students on probation are monitored and requested to come in for conferences once their professors have submitted midterm supports)

Career Occupational Information - (Session discussing the jobs which are available and related to students' area of study)

Test-taking Workshops - (Techniques stressing the skills necessary for taking and passing tests successfully; knowing specific words or context clues; relationships, order etc...)

Resume Writing Workshops - (Working in small groups teaching students specific styles, proper organization and content to be included)

Resume Writing on individual basis

Student Leadership Conference

Interviewing Techniques Workshop

Study Skills Workshops

Tutors and Courses Tutored

There are 39 peer tutors for the 1982 fall semester and tutorial services are offered in more than 20 disciplines, some covering as many as nine levels of a course (See attached list for courses offered.)

Resources

At present, there are no training manuals for tutors. Instead, a collection of brief handouts covering many specific problems and issues are organized in a file. These handouts address the more common tutoring problems such as what to do if a student wants a tutor to do his work for him, or how to say no to crisis tutoring. Some of these handouts have been written in response to tutors' suggestions and some have been borrowed from other sources. The whole file is revised from time to time in order to make it both effective and comprehensive. This way, instead of an actual text for a course in tutoring, the tutors are offered a kind of modular text that, unlike some manuals, is always current and flexible. Other specific resource materials, besides the textbooks, are course syllabi and copies of sample examinations.

SPECIAL SERVICES

PEER TUTORING PROGRAM

FREE tutoring is offered in the following disciplines:

ACCOUNTANCY
ART
BIOLOGY
CHEMISTRY
COMPUTER SCIENCE
ECONOMICS
EDUCATION
ENGLISH
FINANCE
FRENCH
GERMAN
HISTORY
MATHEMATICS
MUSIC
NURSING
PHILOSOPHY
PHYSICS
POLITICAL SCIENCE
PSYCHOLOGY
SOCIOLOGY
SPANISH
SPEECH

Appendix

CAREER PROGRAM

Philosophy

To prepare students to become viable, productive and employable citizens within the community they have selected to reside. In preparing students for this role, we will through, thorough preparation, allow them to view the various options available, along with the responsibilities which accompany the post they have selected. Students will be guided into options which will align them with realistic goal achievements, offering them satisfaction in their career selection.

Objectives

1. To assist in the development of the inner person for a career selection.

2. To make students aware of attitudes and work habits necessary for success.

3. To alert students of financial rewards commensurate with various career status.

4. To introduce options in career selections.

5. To prepare students for employment searches with exercises in: (a) interviewing preparation, (b) letters of introduction, (c) resume writing and (d) career/employment availability.

Workshops

1. Choosing a Career (degree or non-degree)

2. Assertive Training

3. Coping with stress in areas of interviewing, testing and communication with others

4. Resume Preparation

5. On site interviews with companies

6. Interviews at NIU with companies

Resources

1. Individual and group counseling
2. Testing -- with the use of standardized measuring devices to pinpoint areas of aptitude, intelligence, interests and personality
3. Discovery tapes, describing over 68 different majors at NIU
4. A listing of catalogs from most universities and colleges
5. A listing of many corporate opportunities
6. A listing of the various Armed forces training opportunities presently available.

APPENDIX

PEER TUTORING PROGRAM

Philosophy

The Peer Tutoring Program firmly believes that the most decisive influence on students is their contemporaries and peers that they see everyday during classes. The program also believes that better classroom skills, higher grades, better rapport with instructors, and more interest in academic success should be developed and achieved. Furthermore, the program provides tutorial services that will enable students to recognize and correct their academic weaknesses. As a result of this special help, we hope to achieve the following objectives.

Objectives

To increase the attendance and interest of those students who are seriously in need of help.

To get direct input from the academic departments both in terms of selecting and using tutors and supplying texts, methods, and materials.

To assure that all students are receiving adequate information on the material they are responsible for in the classroom.

To help students to become independent of tutorial services alone.

To help students expess their thoughts articulately.

To assist students in subjecting their ideas to critical examination.

Workshops/Activities

The philosophy behind our approach is that tutors learn to do by doing, but while they are tutoring they need support, encouragement, and resources. Several workshops, seminars, and/or activities are provided for tutors. The first one is a six hour tutor orientation/training seminar where all prospective tutors come together with the Special Projects staff. In this setting, the tutors become familar with procedures; their duties and responsibilities are described and explained, and the program expectations are clarified. Other activities include bimonthly staff meetings with tutors when the progress and success of tutorials are discussed and area meetings where professors from the various departments share their expertise with tutors in terms of approaches, methods, and techniques that work for particular disciplines. For example, one area session may be designated for English, speech and language and another for mathematics, physics, and chemistry. (See Addendum F).

STUDENT CONTRACT

Addendum A

STUDENT NAME_____

DATE_____ CUMULATIVE GPA_____ HONOR POINTS_____

ACADEMIC STATUS: _____LOW GPA _____ACADEMIC PROBATION _____ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

MAJOR_____ CLASSIFICATION: ____FRESHMAN ____SOPHOMORE ____JUNIOR ____SENIOR

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

STUDY PLAN _____

_____

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE _____YES _____NO SPECIFIC AREA_____

CAREER PLACEMENT _____YES _____NO PRESENT MAJOR_____ GPA____

COUNSELOR CONTACT _____WEEKLY _____BI-MONTHLY _____MONTHLY

_____ _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE COUNSELOR/COMMITTEE MEMBER

EXIT FORM

Addendum B

STUDENT NAME_____

DATE_____ CUMULATIVE GPA_____ HONOR POINTS_____

ACADEMIC STATUS: _____ACADEMIC PROBATION REMOVED _____PRESENT GPA _____ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

MAJOR_____ CLASSIFICATION: _____FRESHMAN _____SOPHOMORE _____JUNIOR _____SENIOR

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

PEER TUTORING _____YES _____NO

Did your grade and class performance improve? _____YES _____NO
Will you attend NIU during the following semester? _____YES _____NO
Do you anticipate using the tutorial services again? _____YES _____NO

CAREER COUNSELING _____YES _____NO

Did you change your major? _____YES _____NO If yes, present major_____
Did you receive useful career information? _____YES _____NO
Did you secure a job? _____YES _____NO

CHANCE COUNSELOR

Did you see your counselor as stated in your contract? _____YES _____NO
Were your counseling sessions helpful? _____YES _____NO
Did your Study Plan prove to be successful? _____YES _____NO

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

_____ _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE COMMITTEE MEMBER/COUNSELOR

Addendum C

STUDENT DISMISSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Did you receive a letter from Mrs. Chapman? Yes No

2. What is your major?_____

3. Did you appeal to your college for reinstatement? Yes No

4. Do you intend to return to NIU after this semester? Yes No

5. Are you presently attending a junior or community college? Yes No

   A. If yes, which one_____

   B. If no, what are your future plans?_____

   _____

6. Can a career counselor be of assistance in helping you find an alternative career? Yes No

7. What would you say caused your present academic status?_____

   _____

8. Did you see your CHANCE counselor on a regular basis? Yes No

   If no, why didn't you?_____

   _____

9. Did you utilize our peer tutoring program? Yes No

   If no, why?_____

   _____

10. Are there any suggestions or criticisms you may have concerning Special Projects/CHANCE or Special Services Program?

   1._____

   _____

   2._____

   _____

   3._____

   _____

Addendum D

UPPERCLASSMEN QUESTIONNAIRE

Office of Special Projects,
CHANCE and Special Services

1. What is your present classification?
   SOPHOMORE_____ JUNIOR_____ SENIOR____

2. How often do you visit your CHANCE counselor?
   a. Weekly_____ b. Bi-monthly_____ c. Monthly_____
   d. Quarterly_____ e. Semi-annually_____
   f. Annually_____ g. Never_____

3. How often during a semester, do you see your Departmental Adviser?
   a. Beginning_____ b. Middle_____ c. End_____
   d. Never_____ e. Other_____

4. What is your present major?_____

5. With what college organizations are you affiliated?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. What are your major interest areas or hobbies?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Do you have specific academic needs which are not being met?

   YES_____ NO_____

8. If your answer to #7 is yes, please list them.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

9. Do you have specific financial needs which are not being met?

YES_____ NO_____

10. If your answer to #9 is yes, please list them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. What specific academic serv'ces would you be interested in seeing or helping Special Services promote?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

12. What specific social services would you be interested in having this program develop with you being an active participant?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

13. Do you need career or occupational advisement?

YES_____ NO_____

14. Please state any comments or suggestions you may have which were not covered by any of the questions above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Certificate of Award

This certifies that

_____

of the

NIU CHANCE PROGRAM

has been awarded this certificate for

Academic Excellence

for the_____ semester 19__

_____ _____

Office of Special Projects
Northern Illinois University

This certificate has been awarded to

_____

in recognition for your outstanding academic achievement.

_____
Grade point average

_____
Semester

_____
Date

_____
Associate Director of Special Projects
for Support Services

_____
Chance Senior Counselor

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Addendum G

Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Special Services
Office of Special Projects
Williston Hall East
815- 753-0201

Prof._____,

_____ is one of our students, and is enrolled in course (and number)_____, section_____, this_____, 19__semester. It would assist me in providing academic support and aid counselors in providing academic counseling to this student if you* would give me an evaluation of the student's performance in your class to date. All students admitted to the university through the Office of Special Projects' CHANCE program have signed a document which authorizes and permits Northern Illinois University instructors to release information to the staff of Special Projects regarding their academic progress.

ATTENDANCE	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	ATTENDANCE NOT TAKEN
CLASS PARTICIPATION	VERY OFTEN PARTICIPATES	SOMETIMES PARTICIPATES	RARELY/NEVER PARTICIPATES	CLASS MOSTLY LECTURE
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	ABOVE AVERAGE WORK	AVERAGE WORK	BELOW AVERAGE WORK	NO EVALUATION AT PRESENT
BASIS FOR GRADES	MAJOR EXAM	QUIZZES	HOMEWORK PAPERS	NO BASIS YET

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for helping us gain information regarding the academic progress of this student.

Sincerely,

Alfonzo Thurman
Director, Special Projects

Bernadine S. Chapman
Associate Director of Special Projects for Support Services

*You and/or a teaching assistant in charge of laboratory or discussion sessions.

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10-21-81